Toss a Coin

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/26124949.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), The Witcher (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Mischa Lecter, Jack Crawford, Beverly Katz
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Monster Hunters, Witcher AU, Witcher Will, Gigantic Wolf Winston, Hannibal is not about to let this boy do his job properly, but Will is not about to let Hannibal stop him, Curses, Curse Breaking, Semantics are key here, this sorceress needs to rethink her vocab, Happy Ending because we are literally incapable of anything else, We stan Mischa Lecter
Language:	English
Series:	Part 26 of Bellarai Write AU_gust 2020
Collections:	AUgust 2020
Stats:	Published: 2020-08-26 Words: 3,771 Chapters: 1/1

Toss a Coin

by BelladonnaWyck, raiast

Summary

Hannibal Lecter is insufferable.

Will knows the man volunteers only so he can seemingly derail Will's hunt from moment one, though he can't figure out why. It doesn't make sense that a prominent member of such a community - being overrun with beasts - would so willfully try to keep Will from finding the source of the problem.

Until Will does manage to find it.

Notes

Day 26 of AU_Gust Prompts is: Monster Hunter

The Hannigram Witcher AU no one asked for!

See the end of the work for more notes

It's a common occurrence for silence to fall in Will's wake - expected, even; not many men imagine coming face to face with a Witcher, after all. And in any case, Will has never been one to feel particularly chatty, so it's a happenstance of his existence that rarely bothers him. Except for moments like these, when a wary silence falls over the occupants of the inn, the tension in the room palpable, and Will can't get a single man to meet his eye so he can figure out who exactly he's looking for.

Well, not *every* man is so avoidant. There's one in the corner Will caught a glimpse of on his way in. His eyes have followed Will as he's made his trek through the tavern, even now sit heavily upon his shoulders so unlike the fleeting glances of curiosity the rest of this lot have to muster up every ounce of courage to steal. Will can tell already he doesn't want to deal with that man, though; has already gleaned a sense of untrustworthiness within him. So he shuffles through the crowd, boisterous only moments before he'd entered and now silent as the grave, turning his attention to only the woman behind the bar.

It's not as though they should even be all that surprised to see him; he *was* requested for a job.

He's pleasantly surprised when the barmaiden doesn't cower and quake before him like even the toughest of men present do, but casts an appraising glance over him and tilts her head to the side, lips pulling up into a wry smile. "Get you a drink?" She asks, easy as anything; tacks on, after a moment, "Or a bath?"

"Jack Crawford," Will corrects, his voice rumbling out rough and low with disuse.

The woman's almond eyes linger on him a moment longer before flicking over his shoulder, her head dipping in a nod to whoever's eye she's caught. "He's being fetched. Might be a minute. Something while you wait?"

Will considers for a moment the few coins that slide against each other in his purse - the promise of more to come, if he's been called for a legitimate job - and gives a shake of his head. There'll be plenty of time to spend coin *after* he's earned it. Too often he's called to these smaller villages, tales of some terrible beastie preying upon the innocent folk there, only to find a boon of old wive's tales bolstered by horseshit with not a copper to be had from them.

"My treat," a silken voice, thick with an unfamiliar accent purrs as the seat beside him is occupied. Will stares glumly forward, well aware already that the man sat beside him is the very same one that's not taken his eyes from him since the moment he entered the inn. "A *Toussaint,* please, Bev," he nods to the woman across from them, who immediately moves into motion at the request. "And for you?" He turns an inquiring eye upon Will, "Beer? Mead?"

"I prefer my drink a bit stronger," Will rumbles out through a clenched jaw.

"Of course," the man agrees, and Will can *hear* the smirk that twists his lips when he adds, "The mutated genes of a Witcher *would* call for something a bit more robust, wouldn't they?

Bev? Have you any more of that homemade spirit of yours?"

Will's gaze can't help but flick to the barmaid at the sound of amusement in her voice when she responds, "The best peppered vodka, just like granny used to make. I've got one more cask stashed away."

"If you would," he needn't even finish his request before the woman - *Bev* - is nodding and scurrying off through a door toward the back of the bar area. A storage room, no doubt, housing the standard fare for the inn and her own private distillery. "Hannibal Lecter," the man announces. "And you must be the infamous *Witcher* that's been touted up so much around here as of late."

Will allows his gaze to slide to his right, settling not upon the man beside him but the deep red color of the wine that stains the glass on the bar before him. "My reputation usually precedes me in a wholly *other* way," Will points out, earning a soft chuckle from the man.

"Good old Jack has been keen on boosting confidence in you for months now. He's convinced you're the only one that can help our poor, frightened village; knows that you'll need the support of our people to do so."

"So long as I get the information I need, I don't need support or praise from *anyone,"* Will refutes. He's happy, surprisingly so, to see Bev resurface once more with an opaque bottle in her hands, the liquid sloshing chaotically as she steps quickly back to her place before them.

"Jack'll have my neck if he finds me peddling this again, after last time," she murmurs lowly as she applies a generous pour to a pint glass and pushes it toward Will.

"An unfortunate incident," Lecter agrees with a tip of his head, "But one can hardly blame the proprietor for not keeping their drink, can they?"

"Unless it was a bad batch," Will points out. From the way Bev freezes and pales at this, he knows that he's well on the mark of what actually happened. All the same, he holds her gaze as he pulls the drink forward and allows a third of the pint to slide down his throat. It could be stronger but, to be fair, there's hardly a concoction man has thought to brew that's been enough for him for longer than he cares to remember. All in all it's surprisingly palatable and smooth - for an illicit homebrew - and he graces the barmaid with a rare and well-earned twitch of his lips in approval. "It's good. Thanks."

Bev's eyes widening and her hasty attempt to stash the bottle in her hands below the counter is all the indication Will needs to know that he's finally been graced with the presence of the one who sent for him.

"You must be Will of Wolf Trap," a deep voice muses out loud behind him. Will doesn't bother twisting around in his seat, knows the man will come to him - they always do. He takes another sip of his spirits when the man sidles up beside him, on his left, so now he is being boxed in by two men that find him interesting enough to seek him out when all others might shy away. "Heard a lot about you. Heard you can maybe take care of a problem for us."

“I can hear the situation, take a look,” Will agrees, *“Then* I’ll decide if there’s a problem, and how much it’ll cost you to solve it.”

“Just as charming as your reputation implies,” Crawford notes wryly. Will allows his eyes to slip to the side, to the dark-skinned, burly man that leans against the counter beside him, frowning as he stares at Will’s cup. “You’re not selling more of that vodka of yours, are you, Bev?”

“It’s water,” Will declares, gulping the last of it and pushing the pint aside carelessly. He can feel the disapproving gaze of the man next to him, sense it shifting from him to the barmaid before them, growing ever more anxious with each passing moment. “You presumed you had a job for me, I recall,” Will begins, shifting the scrutiny back to himself fully. He can practically feel the tension leave the shoulders of the young woman before him. “Why don’t we have a chat about that?”

Hannibal Lecter is insufferable.

Will knows the man volunteers only so he can seemingly derail Will’s hunt from moment one, though he can’t figure out *why.* It doesn’t make sense that a prominent member of such a community - being overrun with beasts - would so willfully try to keep Will from finding the source of the problem.

Until Will *does* manage to find it. It takes longer than his mission would have if conducted alone, but Will is good at what he does. So, even with Hannibal’s subtle yet persistent attempts, Will manages to locate the source of the disruptive energy he’s felt since first stepping into the territory.

It’s a girl, with dirty blonde hair and olive skin, her eyes closed in sleep though her features seem to indicate it’s anything but a peaceful slumber. Even without being able to see whether her eyes are the same piercing amber as the man beside him, Will knows she’s related to Hannibal somehow. Her age, roughly adolescent, perhaps thirteen or so, implies sibling.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” He accuses softly, stepping closer to her slowly, not wanting to spook Hannibal into doing something regrettable. Witchers don’t have families by design, either born or made in the bowels of a sorcerer’s lab. Will has been what he is for so long the memories of his father are vague and faded - or who he believes was his father, his *real* father - they feel more like a dream than any sort of believable reality.

It’s been nearly a week of hunting together, supping together, and sharing space inside tight cave entrances or beneath the wide expanse of tree limbs in the forest surrounding the village. Will feels like he knows Hannibal, and so he’s surprised by this development. It isn’t often someone manages to take Will unawares.

“She suffers because of me, our village suffers because of my poor choices. My parents made a deal with a sorceress before I was born that if she blessed them with a child, they would allow her to wed their first-born son. I’d no interest in Bedelia, and I told her as much a year

ago. She burned our manor, killed my parents, and cursed my sister to sleep for as long as I should live so that I would know nothing but suffering...”

“Her nightmares are made flesh. It’s why there have been so many reports of such a variety of beasts and evil sightings in the village.” Will observes, fingers idly tracing over the collection of glass vials and bottles lining his belt.

“I can’t let you hurt her, Witcher. I’d rather die, would rather see you die, than to harm her. Her nightmares are not her own, the destruction isn’t her fault.” Will feels Hannibal at his back, closer than he was a moment ago.

“What if I told you I could break the curse and save her? Save your village?” Will turns to face Hannibal, allowing the other man to see the truth in his words as they lock gazes. Hannibal searches his eyes for a long time, finally nodding in acquiescence. Will doesn’t miss the blade Hannibal slides back into his boot.

“What would you do?”

Will grabs three glass bottles from his supply and a thin vial of a foul-smelling yellow liquid, placing them out along the tomb atop which the girl lays. “Your sister -”

“Mischa.” Hannibal provides, and Will unstoppers the vial and hands it to Hannibal.

“Mischa. She must sleep until you are dead, that is what the sorceress said *exactly?”*

“Yes. Her precise words, meant to destroy me and leave me with nothing but my loneliness.”

“Drink this.” Will offers up the vial, the yellow liquid swishing dangerously close to the lip as he passes it over to Hannibal who consumes it without hesitation.

“What will it do?”

“Kill you.” Will replies, busying himself with preparing the rest of the ingredients.

To his credit, Hannibal remains calm at the declaration, stepping closer to watch Will with a hawk’s eye. “I suppose you have some sort of reason for killing me?”

“The curse is clear. She will sleep while you live. She’ll wake once you die.”

A moment of silence passes heavily between them before Hannibal responds. “I’m to sacrifice my life for hers, then?”

Will pauses in his preparations, shifting to turn a scrutinizing gaze onto the human beside him. “Is that a problem?”

There’s no hesitation before Hannibal shakes his head, his voice soft but sure when he replies, “No. Of course not. I...only wished to hold her one more time.”

“She’s just there, sleeping,” Will points out. “Hold her.”

The emotion that swells warm and wide in Will's chest when Hannibal seizes his suggestion and does just that is foreign to Will. Foreign, but not unwelcome.

"The lengths you'll go to for your sister...there's not enough love like yours in the world," Will informs him softly. "Love is powerful. And curses are fickle things. You needn't *stay* dead to fulfil the requirements of the curse."

"Are you a deity of some sort with the power of life and death, then?" Hannibal questions, and Will hears only curiosity in his voice, not even the slightest hint of a tremor.

"I'm a Witcher." Will knows that might not answer Hannibal's questions, but it should. Witchers are known for their paranoia; there's a reason they are so hard to kill. Will carries several potions and concoctions with him at any given time with the power to heal, to revive, to save his life.

He could save those potions, choose instead to let Hannibal die and kill his sister as well. Go retrieve his coin and leave this village behind. But something about the man simply won't let him abandon him; he longs to restore his hope so that at least one of them can still look at the world with something akin to blind optimism. Wishes to reward the vast, unending, death-defying *love* the human holds for his little sister.

Hannibal is skilled at veiling himself from the world around him; it's not until Will finishes preparing the vials before him that he turns around to see just how affected the human has grown to the poison.

He's silent, but his chest heaves for breath and a thin sheen of sweat has begun to bead the man's skin. Even as he grows weaker, his limbs trembling with the effort to retain his position, to keep his sister's frail and limp body cradled against his own, Hannibal neither shows nor sounds any distress.

It's only due to Will's intimate knowledge of potion and poison that signals him to the man's imminent end, and he drifts closer to the pair of them, extracting Mischa from her brother's protective embrace to lay her down gently only moments before Hannibal gives one unintended, breathless gasp and falls limp himself.

He gets a grasp around the dead man and hauls his body to the ground as gently as able, positioning him onto his back. The window of time will be short, and Will must be certain not to miss it, or risk the young girl awaking into a world where she has nothing and no one, with no way to avoid her brother's corpse - a life laid down for her own.

He swipes up the potion he'd mixed only minutes before, kneels at the ready next to Hannibal's lifeless body, his eyes trained upon the slim thing laying atop the slab of granite before him. The moment her eyelids begin to flutter, her lips parting with a shaky breath, Will turns his attention to Hannibal fully, tilting the man's head back and emptying the vial in his grasp down his throat.

Will stares at the dead man, waiting for life to seize him once again. Nearly a minute passes with no indication that the potion has taken effect, and Will curses beneath his breath, places

his hands over the human's chest and pumps it down again and again, willing his blood to flow, to carry the potion through his veins.

He pauses at the sound of stirring behind him, the soft mewl of a child awakening followed by a lilting voice thick and sluggish with sleep murmuring out, "Hanni?"

Will turns his attention to the young girl, who has pulled herself into a seated position, though only just, her wide eyes blinking blearily but growing sharp when faced with the unfamiliar man before her.

"Who are you?" Mischa demands, her tone already devoid of the eternal sleep that plagued her only moments before. "Where's Hanni?"

Will's stomach clenches at the question, something like dread settling heavy and sick in his gut. He's never before grown invested in these sorts of situations, never before felt such anger and loss at the death of an unknown human. Perhaps the young thing has awakened some sort of instinct within him, a desire to protect, to shield her from the horrors of the world she's already long-since been experiencing in her unending slumber.

Perhaps Hannibal was not as *unknown* a human as Will would have liked to believe.

Either way, he finds he must speak from a throat clogged with emotion, his chest tight and eyes prickling as he begins, "He's -"

"Hanni!" The young girl brightens in an instant, her wide, shining eyes trained over Will's shoulder, lips stretched into a grin far wider than a mouth so small should be able to contort.

"Hello, Little Bird," Hannibal's voice rumbles warmly behind him, and Will starts, twisting around to find the very *not-dead* human sitting up and reaching out to his little sister.

Will snaps his mouth closed, shock washing through him followed quickly by a sense of relief unfamiliar to him. He watches the reunion from several feet away, the two siblings wrapped up in each other's arms and oblivious to their surroundings as Will slips around them and exits the tomb, whistling sharply once he's outside.

Winston appears from the edge of the forest, emerging like a shadow from the darkness. He approaches Will cautiously, still scenting strangers on the air but trusting that it's safe to join his rider. Winston stands nearly seven feet tall on all fours, as large as a horse and Will's trusted companion in his travels. He usually leaves Winston to roam freely in the woods when he handles his bounties, keeping him out of public sight easier than trying to explain the unnaturally-sized wolfhim to already anxious, restless villagers, or risk having to protect him from those that might seek to harm him due to fear or greed.

Will runs his palm along Winston's flank, smoothing out some kinks in his fur before mounting him. Before he can manage to ride away, he hears shuffling from the tomb and a throat clearing. He turns to see Hannibal and Mischa, still entwined with one another, though now Hannibal has his arm wrapped tightly around his sister with her smaller frame pressed tightly to his own.

“I hope you won’t disappear just yet. I know you can’t collect your coin without a head as proof of your success, but I would like to offer you up anything at all at my family estate. We’ve nothing left from the manor house since the fire, but we have an aunt who lives several villages over and her manor is palatial, filled with priceless artifacts. You’re welcome to any of them, *all of them,* I’ve the only precious treasure I could ever find need for right here.” He squeezes Mischa tighter still, looking down upon her with such fondness it makes Will’s chest ache and his throat burn.

Mischa disconnects from her brother in a flurry of limbs, rushing up to Winston and sliding her palm along his furry sides, laughing brightly when he licks her in return for her grooming. Winston rarely likes humans, as untrusting and paranoid as Will himself, so it’s shocking to see the wolf so immediately calm around the girl.

He considers the pair of them, the unfamiliar swell of emotion they instill within his chest, and thinks that maybe, just maybe, it would be worth travelling with the two of them, to see what their aunt may have to offer.

“I’ll go with you to this village,” Will agrees, his mouth moving before his brain has fully had time to consider the repercussions of such a point of action. “I’ll claim what I need to, for payment,” he agrees. “But nothing more.”

Hannibal bows his head in a deferential nod. “All the same, you’ll have our unending gratitude.”

Will has no use or need for *gratitude,* but he *is* interested in retaining the human’s company, for now, so he doesn’t comment on the remark and merely nods his head in understanding. “Have you a horse to travel by? Winston could take the girl as well, but not the three of us at once.”

“I’ve a horse,” Hannibal confirms and then pauses, glancing down at the frail girl wrapped about his hip. “Mischa’s safety is paramount. I would feel more at ease if she were to ride along with you for the journey, if it’s not too troublesome to ask.”

Will knows the lengths Hannibal has gone to in order to protect his little sister while she suffered the effects of her curse, remembers clearly how readily and willing he was to lay down his life for her own. To trust her safety now to the likes of *Will*… He couldn’t say what emotion grows thick within his throat, clogging his voice, but for a moment he can only nod.

“Winston seems to like her,” he notes vaguely after a moment of strained silence.

Hannibal’s smile grows broad at that, as though he can see through Will’s poorly veiled insinuations with far more ease and clarity than a relative stranger - and human - should be able to manage. “And she, him.”

He braces his thighs around Winston, leaning down to help Hannibal lift Mischa to sit in front of him, and heads in the direction of the setting sun. Mischa talks incessantly; Will would be surprised if she didn’t after so long being silenced, and he’s comfortable in the knowledge that his world is no longer a lonely stretch of simply existing, and, come what may, he knows he’s made the right decision.

Officially, he is only accompanying the pair to their destination. A deeper part of Will, the part that houses the strongest of his Witcher instincts, knows already that the man will travel with him much further than that, whether it be in body or in spirit.

Will has never been one accustomed to making connections or forging friendships. But as he rocks with the sway of his wolf's steady pace, the warm frailty of the young girl in his arms and the even warmer presence of Hannibal strolling by his side, Will begins to rethink his adversity to the concept.

End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoy our collaborative works you should follow us on Twitter and Tumblr for all sorts of extra content and teasers!

We also have a Discord server where you can chat with us, throw us prompts, and post images/art inspired by our work! You may also catch a snippet or two of some WIPs! DM us on Twitter for details!

'Til next time! 💚 💜 BellaRai

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!